

23. The process according to Claim 21, wherein the lactic acid bacteria are stored in frozen or lyophilized form.

24. The lactic acid bacterial starter culture obtained by a process according to any one of Claims 14 to 23.

25. A process for preparing a fermented product, comprising seeding a medium to be fermented with a lactic acid bacterial starter culture according to Claim 24.

26. A process for increasing the survival of lactic acid bacteria, comprising culturing the lactic acid bacteria under aerobic conditions in a medium containing at least one porphyrin compound is.--

REMARKS

Claims 14-26 are active in this application.

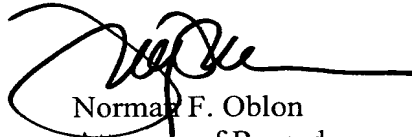
Newly added Claims 14-26 are supported by the specification at pages 3-17 and by original Claims 1-13. No new matter is believed to have been added to this application by these amendments.

Applicants submit that the present application is ready for examination on the merits.

Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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